

Interagency Human Trafficking Task Force
Data Collection and Information Sharing Subcommittee Meeting
August 13, 2012
Convened at 9:00 am

Members present: Chief Tom Pasquarello (co-chair), Amy Farrell (co-chair), Chris Carroll, Susan Goldfarb

Members absent: David Carbin, Susan Goldfard, Mike Coelho

Massachusetts Attorneys General Staff Present: Britte McBride, Deborah Bercovitch

The group discussion began with an overview the screening questions that were developed during the last meeting. Group members provided input and suggestions for improving the questions. The group suggested some restructuring of the questions to ensure that the first questions were easy to answer and non-threatening. As a result, we moved all questions about age and birthdate to further into the interview after the respondent had a chance to answer some preliminary questions. The group also tried to balance the goals of gathering specific information which is more difficult to fabricate if the individual wants to evade answering questions and ensuring that the screening process is not threatening and does not cause harm. In some cases we developed a question and a set of alternative questions that are more specific but which we would like further feedback about before integrating into the tool. The group also tried to streamline the question, sometimes grouping questions that are part of a series together to help simplify the instruments.

The following represents a preliminary list of the modified questions we discussed for *screening minors*:

1. Are you in school?
 - a. If yes, where do you go to school?
2. Who would you contact in an emergency?
3. What is your age? (alternative: what is your birthdate?)
4. Where do you live? (alternatives: Where do you sleep and eat? What is your address?)
 - a. Who else lives there?
 - a. Can you come and go as you please?
 - b. Have you ever been threatened if you tried to leave?
5. Do you work? (alternative: How do you get money?)
6. Have you ever exchanged sex for food, clothing, housing or money?
7. Has anyone forced you to do something that you don't want to do?
8. Did someone ever touch you in a way you did not like?
9. Has anyone hurt or tried to hurt you?
10. How are you feeling?
 - a. Do you need any medical assistance?
 - b. Do you feel safe?

The following represents a preliminary list of the modified questions that we discussed for *screening adults*.

2. Describe where you live (alternative: Are you from the area? Where do you sleep and eat? What is the address?)
 - a. Who else lives there?
 - b. Can you come and go as you please?
 - c. Have you ever been threatened if you tried to leave?
3. What are your living conditions like?
 - a. Do you sleep on a bed, cot or on the floor?
 - b. Are there locks on your doors and windows so you cannot get out?
4. Have you been deprived of food, water, sleep or medical care?
5. What is your age? (Alternative: what is your birthdate?) *Question used to screen that not a minor*
6. Do you work? (Alternative: Do you get paid for what you do?)
 - a. How do you get to and from work?
 - b. What are your working conditions like?
7. Have you ever exchanged sex for anything of value such as shelter, food, clothing or money?
8. Have your identification or travel documents been taken from you?
9. Have you ever been physically harmed in any way?
10. Has anyone ever threatened you or your family?
11. Is anyone making you do anything that you do not want to do?
12. How are you feeling?
 - a. Do you need any medical assistance?
 - b. Do you feel safe?

After reviewing the wording of the screening questions the group moved to a discussion of the development of protocols to guide the use of the screening tool. The group decided that we would need a protocol that was framed around a decision tree since there would be different users and the steps for using the screening tool would differ by user. The group discussed the differences in users that may use the tool to gather investigative information such as law enforcement and users that should conducting screenings that are not investigative in nature. The protocols will have instructions about when the screening should be stopped and referrals made to law enforcement and therapeutic interventions should be initiated.

We began the discussion by identifying a group of potential screening tool users. We identified six main categories of users: 1) law enforcement (included patrol officers and detectives), 2) other emergency first responders such as EMT and fire department, 3) health care workers/hospital workers, 4) victim witness advocates and victim service providers, 5) other social service providers such as social workers, child welfare, street workers, school officials, 6) licensing regulatory agents.

We then identified some elements of the protocol that would need to be the same for all users, such as an explanation about what human trafficking is, what a human trafficking victim might look like (some examples of human trafficking), a general description of the situations where

you might screen individuals for trafficking and a description of why human trafficking is hard to identify and why we need screening tools and the general purpose of a screening protocol (e.g. to help identify victims, gather information about human trafficking in Massachusetts).

We then identified elements of the protocol that would need to be specified for each group of users. These include:

- Goals of the tool for the user group
- When to use the tool
- How to use the tool
 - Voluntariness of the screening questions – not intended to cause harm
 - Asking questions in a safe space
 - Identifying the need for translators or language assistance or other special needs of potential victims prior to screening
- What to do after screening
 - Referrals to victim service providers and law enforcement/mandatory reporting
 - Ensuring safety of victim

At the next meeting we will begin to flesh out specific instructions for the protocol including the development of general instructions and the instructions for each of the groups of potential users.

As a last item of business, the group discussed the presentation of the subcommittee's work at the next full task force meeting in September. The group agreed that we should lay out a general framework of the group's work but hold off on distributing drafts of the screening tool or protocol until they had gone through a first round of external review. We discussed an outline for the group presentation that will include the following:

1. Overview of the goals of the subcommittee
2. Describe subcommittee membership
3. Identify the specific tasks that the subcommittee will undertake to achieve our designated goals
4. Describe the development of the screening tool
 - a. Minor screening questions
 - b. Adult screening questions
5. Identify the preliminary users of the tool
6. Describe the development of protocols to guide the use of the screening tool, decision tree model
7. Identify next steps for finalizing the screening tool and protocols
 - a. External review and comment
 - b. Presentation to the full task force
8. Next steps for subcommittee – development of an information sharing mechanism such as a database and a protocol for information sharing

The group identified the next three meeting dates as September 17th from 9:00-10:30 am at the Attorney General's Office, October 15th from 9:00-10:30 at Northeastern University and November 19th from 9:00 – 10:30 at the Division of Professional Licensure. Meeting adjourned at 10:30 am.